

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An image comparison apparatus,
comprising:

an object detection sensor for detecting existence of a photograph object;

a camera responsive to said object detection sensor for acquiring in which
an a plurality of acquired image images prior to the pressing of a check start
button and responsive to operation of said check start button for acquiring at
least one acquired image of [[a]] the photograph object after the pressing of said
check start button; is acquired by using photograph means, and in a case where

a comparison system a button for check confirmation is pressed down,
the acquired image is compared for initiating a comparison of said at least one
check image with information concerning at least one previously memorized
registration image images, and outputting a first comparison result indicating
whether said at least one acquired image matches said at least one registration
image is outputted, wherein:

an object detection sensor for detecting existence of the photograph object
is provided;

the photograph means acquires a plurality of images of the photograph
object during a period from detection of the photograph object by the object
detection sensor to a press of the button; and

in a case where the button is pressed, first comparison result indicates no
match, said comparison system initiates a second comparison of a prior acquired
image obtained prior to said at least one acquired image and compares said

~~prior acquired image at least one of the plurality of acquired images is compared with the information concerning the previously memorized said at least one registration image and outputs a second comparison result.~~

2. (Currently amended) An image comparison method, comprising the steps of:

~~detecting existence~~ the presence of a photograph an object to be checked;

~~capturing a plurality of acquired images of the photograph object in a case where the photograph object is detected;~~

~~detecting a press of a~~ check start button for check confirmation;

~~comparing at least one of the plurality of captured images said at least one acquired image with information concerning at least one previously memorized registration image images when the press of the button is detected; and~~

~~outputting a first comparison result indicating whether said at least one acquired image matches said at least one registration image; and~~

~~repeating said comparing step using a different acquired image, if said comparison result indicates no match, until at least one of said plurality of acquired images matches at least one registration image or until there are no more acquired images for comparison.~~

3-16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) An image comparison apparatus, comprising:

an object detection sensor for detecting a person to be photographed;

a camera for creating at least one photographic image of said person upon detection by said object detection sensor; and

a check start button for beginning a comparison between said at least one photographic image and photographic images previously stored by said image comparison apparatus in order to determine whether a match exists and for outputting at least one comparison result, wherein:

a positive result is outputted in a case where there is an acquired image and registration image pair satisfying a check judgment threshold; and

a negative result is outputted in a case where there is an acquired image and registration image pair that do not satisfy the check judgment threshold; and

where there is a negative result, the comparison apparatus compares another of said at least one captured acquired image of the object with said at least one registration image.

18. (Previously presented) The image comparison apparatus of claim 17 further comprising: an image comparison center apparatus for capturing said at least one photographic image created by said camera and comparing it with said photographic images previously stored.

19. (Previously presented) The image comparison apparatus of claim 17 further comprising: an illumination device for illuminating a subject to be photographed by said camera.

20. (Previously presented) The image comparison apparatus of claim 17 further comprising: a check count display for displaying a number of times a check operation has been conducted.

21. (Previously presented) The image comparison apparatus of claim 17 further comprising: a check result display for displaying results of whether a match exists.

22. (Currently amended) The image comparison apparatus of claim 17 further comprising: a personal identification key keypad for receiving a personal identification code input to be compared with a previously stored personal identification code.

23. (Previously presented) The image comparison apparatus of claim 17 further comprising: a card reader for reading a personal code stored on a card, said personal code to be compared with a previously stored personal code.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 further comprising:

determining that an image acquired immediately after the check start button is pressed ~~is not suitable for comparison~~ does not match said at least one registration image; and

selecting a second ~~photographic~~ acquired image for comparison, ~~and said~~ second ~~photographic~~ acquired image having been ~~created by said camera~~ captured prior to said check start button being pressed.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 24 further comprising:

determining that said second acquired image does not match said at least one registration image ~~is not suitable for comparison~~; and

selecting a third ~~photographic~~ acquired image for comparison, said third ~~photographic~~ acquired image having been ~~created by said camera~~ captured prior to the capture of said second ~~photographic~~ acquired image.

26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 24 further comprising:

determining that said second acquired image does not match said at least one registration image ~~is not suitable for comparison~~; and

comparing a personal identification code received at a personal identification key keypad with a previously stored personal identification code to determine whether ~~they match~~ a match exists.

27. (Currently amended) The method of claim 24 further comprising:

determining that said second acquired image does not match said at least one registration image ~~is not suitable for comparison~~; and

comparing a personal identification code read from an identification card with a previously stored personal identification code to determine whether ~~they match~~ a match exists.

28. (Canceled)